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ABSTRACT

Users of the reference library at Blackhawk Community College (Illinois) were surveyed to determine user satisfaction and the total number of transactions. The survey's objective was to pinpoint problem areas, supply objective information, develop guidelines and standards, and support needed improvements or the continued maintenance of good service. The reference librarian recorded the number of reference transactions on certain days, and clients of the reference department were asked to complete surveys to determine user satisfaction. Questions focused on the relevance of the information provided, the satisfaction with the amount of information provided, the completeness of the answer received, the helpfulness of the staff, and satisfaction with the reference transaction. Existing literature on library studies is reviewed, noting in particular the lack of national standards for reference departments. Study findings, based on an 89% response rate to the client survey (N=158) and an analysis of 225 reference service transactions on 7 days, included the following: (1) by far the largest number of reference clients were Blackhawk College students, although many users came from the state university; (2) the largest number of requests were for help on course work, while research questions produced the second highest number of requests; (3) most users were satisfied with the information and helpfulness of the staff, with the level of satisfaction averaging over four on a five-point scale in all categories; (4) most questions were asked between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.; and (5) most questions were simple enough that non-professional staff members, rather than professional librarians, could answer them, leaving librarians more time for professional activities. The survey instrument and statistical tally sheet are included. (DJD)

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES

USER SATISFACTION AND SERVICE TRANSACTIONS FOR A REFERENCE DEPARTMENT IN AN ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER

by

Nancy M. Cornish

A Report Prepared Under the Direction of
Professor Patricia Cannon
In Fulfillment of the Requirements
for LIBS 571

DeKalb, Illinois
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THE PROBLEM

"There is wide agreement that the first step to successful evaluation is the accurate statement of the objectives and goals of the activity to be evaluated,"[1] noted Charles A. Bunge. "The library's ultimate goal may be defined as meeting its users' information needs, which is best assessed from the users' perspective."[2] The purpose of this research was to determine the current effectiveness in meeting the information needs of clients of the reference department of a community college library in Illinois. Tabulation of service transactions into reference transactions and directional questions and their dispensations was done.

The reference department is accessing new information through the use of computers. These sophisticated tools require interpretation on the part of the reference librarian. More and more of the time of the librarian is spent in acting as a functionary in the location of valuable information for the client. Bill Katz explains, "There is simply too much data . . . for the lay person to cope with . . . the advent of the online search demands . . . someone who can find the data . . . quickly and efficiently, . . . and there is an increasing respect for knowledge."[3] The planning of work time and load is changing due to this increased responsibility.

Evaluation of reference service tells us where we've been, and helps to plan the direction we should go. Marilyn Von Seggern says it well, "The last step in coming full circle in the planning process is evaluation, which identifies the success

of the planning process and is critical to the clarity and success with which the next round of planning proceeds."[4]

The reasons for evaluation listed by Murfin and Ruland include the following: "(1) pinpointing problem areas, (2) supplying objective documentation to resolve problems, (3) providing a basis for comparison to assess the effects of change, (4) developing guidelines and standards, and (5) supporting needed improvements in inadequate service or continued maintenance of good service."[5]

In this research, a questionnaire was completed by the client, and the reference librarian recorded the number of reference transactions indicating the time of the transaction. Effectiveness of the reference transaction was judged from the user's point of view. Clients of the reference department were surveyed to determine the relevance of information provided, their satisfaction with the amount of information provided, the completeness of the answer received, the helpfulness of the staff, and how satisfied they were with the reference transaction. Users were categorized into undergraduates, graduates, staff, faculty, and other. The use for the information was separated into course work, research, teaching, a mix of purposes, current awareness, and other. The number of surveys returned was compared with those distributed. This study provides a basis for future planning for the reference department of a community college library.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies of libraries throughout the country during the past ten to fifteen years find deficiencies in the quality of reference services. Of great concern to the profession is the conclusion of a few researchers that only fifty-five percent of the factual and bibliographic questions addressed by the reference departments are answered correctly. Many are trying to devise methods of evaluation which more accurately reflect the functioning of reference librarians. Compounding the problems of evaluation is the fact presented by Sydney Pierce that, "there is no real consensus on evaluative techniques, and much uneasiness over ultimate applications of the results of evaluations."[6]

One of the first studies reported nationally which created the furor at the reference desk was conducted during the summer and fall of 1983 in Maryland. The study, administered by the Public Library Branch of the Division of Library Development and Services, Maryland State Department of Education, found library patrons received correct answers from librarians to moderately difficult questions only fifty-five percent of the time.[7] The finding left embarrassed reference librarians throughout the country scurrying for evidence to the contrary. In the process, they realized there were no national standards of excellence to use as a basis for comparing reference service.

How important are national standards, they asked? Bernard Vavrek wrote, "It is my view that the evaluation of reference/information services can be accomplished

without the availability of nationally produced standards, and that those who are 'waiting for the perfect' really do not wish to do any evaluating at all."[8]

Without national methodologies, the reference desk evaluation leaves many managers undecided on how to proceed. Would the number of questions answered in a year be a way of evaluating reference services? Herbert Goldhor spoke to this question. "The traditional and most often used output measure of public libraries is circulation. It may be, however, that qualitatively the most important function is the answering of reference questions."[9]

Did the finding suggest that education of librarians was at the heart of the problem? Frances Benham wanted to determine if reference accuracy reflected school performance, and if recent graduates of schools accredited by the American Library Association would answer reference questions with more accuracy than those answering for libraries. This was not the case. Her findings led her to comment, "Thus, to the degree that study results can be compared, it would appear that recent graduates of American Library Association accredited library schools do not respond more accurately to fact reference questions than do libraries. It should be of concern to library school educators in the American Library Association accredited programs that the mean reference response accuracy level of their recent graduates was . . . low on fact questions."[10]

What then is the most efficient way for collecting the data needed for understanding and managing reference departments? William F. Young writes, "The most promising methodologies for evaluating reference librarians are those that focus

on what reference librarians do and how tey do it, the evaluation of behaviors."[11] Researchers began to study behavior of those involved with the information transfer. The focus fell on the reference transaction.

Jo Bell Whitlatch broke the reference transaction into participants--the user requiring a service and the librarian giving this service. She lists service outcomes of, "user satisfaction, relevance, quantity, librarian perceptions, accuracy, and locating materials."[12] The transaction can be viewed from both the point of view of the user, and the librarian, and the perception of the transaction is not necessarily the same for both participants.

White[13] discusses keeping a record specifically designed for analyzing reference desk transactions or service contacts. Service contacts provide a means of evaluating the reference desk. Bernard Vavrek describes them as "basically a constructive effort to give tangibility to what is sometimes thought of as an intangible service."[14]

The setting of the community college and the role of the student in the education process comes into the question of satisfaction at the reference desk. Bea Flinner states, "The question is not how much information and help should be given to students; rather, the question is how much aid should ethically be given by the reference librarian, and how much should the student search."[15] It is possible that the type of library influences the amount of aid the reference librarian should ethically give to the user, particularly if the user is a student doing assigned research.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this research, the following definitions are applicable:

Directional questions: "an information contact which facilitates the use of the library."[16]

Evaluation: the appraisal of the results of some activity designed to accomplish a goal or objective or task.

Reference department: library desk where clients are directed for personal assistance in their search for information.

Reference question: a request for the "use, recommendation, interpretation, or instruction in the use of one or more information sources or knowledge of such sources by a member of the reference staff."[17]

Reference service: personal assistance provided to users in pursuit of information.

Reference transaction : "An information contact that involves the knowledge, use, recommendations, interpretation, or instruction of one or more information sources by a member of the library staff."[18]

Service Contact: a single instance of providing reference service.

ASSUMPTIONS

The clients responding to the survey on user satisfaction on the reference transaction were confining their responses to the transaction which had just taken place. The accuracy of records was assumed to correctly represent use of time for each of the participants in the study on service transactions.

The randomly chosen days which were studied yielded an accurate reflection of the work load for the reference desk.

LIMITATIONS

This study focused on the user of a reference department of a community college library in Illinois. Evaluation covered the user's perception of satisfaction with the reference transaction. In addition, reference librarians recorded transactions at the reference desk.

The success of this study was dependent upon the participation of individual reference librarians in the community college library. Because of data unique to the specific community college library being studied, it may not be possible to generalize findings to other situations.

There is no right or wrong way to complete the reference satisfaction survey, yet a misinterpretation of how to answer a question could be a limitation. Researcher bias was tested out of the reference satisfaction questionnaire during the development of the instrument and instructions as to taking of the sample followed meticulously.

The question of ethics of amount of information a reference librarian at a community college library should supply a student was not considered. For the purpose of this study, the reference librarian gave the student all the information requested to the best of her understanding of the request.

Both reference librarians and their clients possess a multitude of individual characteristics. No consideration was given in this research to human factors and personality differences of librarians or clients.

METHODOLOGY

In order to determine user satisfaction, a survey was taken of users of the reference desk who asked reference questions of librarians at a community college learning resources center in Illinois. A copy of the "Reference Satisfaction Survey" completed by users is in Appendix A.

A memo to the staff of the learning resources center was distributed prior to the survey. It explained the purpose of the survey, when the survey would be taken, and where the survey questionnaires were to be collected. A copy of the "Staff Memo" may be seen in Appendix A.

A separate memo was sent to part time reference department staff who would be working during the survey and expected to keep tabulations on service transactions. A copy of this "Reference Part Time Staff Memo" may also be found in Appendix A.

Clients of the reference desk were approached following a reference transaction and asked to fill out a survey concerning their contact with the reference librarian. The surveyor was instructed as to how to administer the survey both verbally and in a memo to her. (See the "Administering the Survey Memo" in

Appendix B.) The surveyor sat next to the reference desk, out of the way of traffic but where she could hear the transaction, and decided if the client's question was a reference question. If it was determined to be a reference question, she approached them and asked if they were willing to fill out the survey. The clients declining a survey were recorded, as were those agreeing to fill out a survey. The completed survey was placed in a box as the client exited the library.

Questionnaires were adapted from the measurements developed for The Association of College and Research Libraries by the Ad Hoc Committee on Performance Measures of the American Library Association.[19] The surveyor recorded the number of questionnaires distributed and any special information concerning her contact with the client. A copy of the "Surveyor's Report" may be found in Appendix B.

On the day following the survey, reference librarians recorded statistics of their service transactions. Included were number of questions asked, if the question was directional or reference, and the time of day the reference question was asked. Each also recorded the number of redirected transactions and the number of delayed transactions. Copies of this form, "Reference Services Statistics," are located in Appendix B.

Data were gathered over fall semester, 1990, on randomly selected days representing the working week.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This section presents the data collected for this investigation and analyses the findings verbally and comparatively in charts and tables. Quattro Pro spreadsheet was used in analysis of data and development of tables.

General Findings

The response rate on the 188 questionnaires distributed was 89%, or 168 responses in all. Data for each case appears in Appendix C.

Table 1

CLIENT DISTRIBUTION

UNDERGRADUATE			GRADUATE STUDENT	STAFF	FACULTY	OTHER	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE
BLACK HAWK	WESTERN	OTHER						
103	18	5	2	11	5	14	10	158
65.19%	11.39%	3.16%	1.27%	6.96%	3.16%	8.86%		100.00%

Table 1 gives the client distribution as well as the per cent in each category. The learning resources center of the community college services an extension program with a state university in Illinois. The state university was represented by a category in the survey to indicate whether these students were using the reference desk of the learning resources center. There were a total of 158 responses. Client distribution for undergraduates indicates that 103 (65.19%) of the responses were Black Hawk

students. Eighteen (11.39%) were Western Illinois students and five (3.16%) responses fell into the category of "other."

There were two (1.27%) responses from Graduate students. Staff of the community college accounted for eleven (6.96%) responses. Five (3.16%) faculty responded, and fourteen (8.86%) of the responses were from the "other" category. Ten people made no response regarding their status.

Table 2

USE DISTRIBUTION

COURSE WORK	RESEARCH	TEACHING	SEVERAL	CURRENT AWARENESS	OTHER	NO RES-PONSE	TOTAL RESPONSE
56	50	0	39	7	15	1	167
33.53%	29.94%	0.00%	23.35%	4.19%	8.98%		100.00%

Table 2 and Figure 1 give the use distribution of information received. The use distribution of information requested had a total of one hundred and fifty-seven responses. Fifty-six (33.53%) used the information for course work. Fifty (29.94%) were doing research on a topic. No teacher came to the reference desk for material to use for teaching during the survey. Thirty-nine (23.35%) responses indicated several uses for the information. Seven (4.19%) people indicated that they were using the information for current awareness. Fifteen (8.98%) responses fell into the "other" category. One person did not respond on the use of the materials.

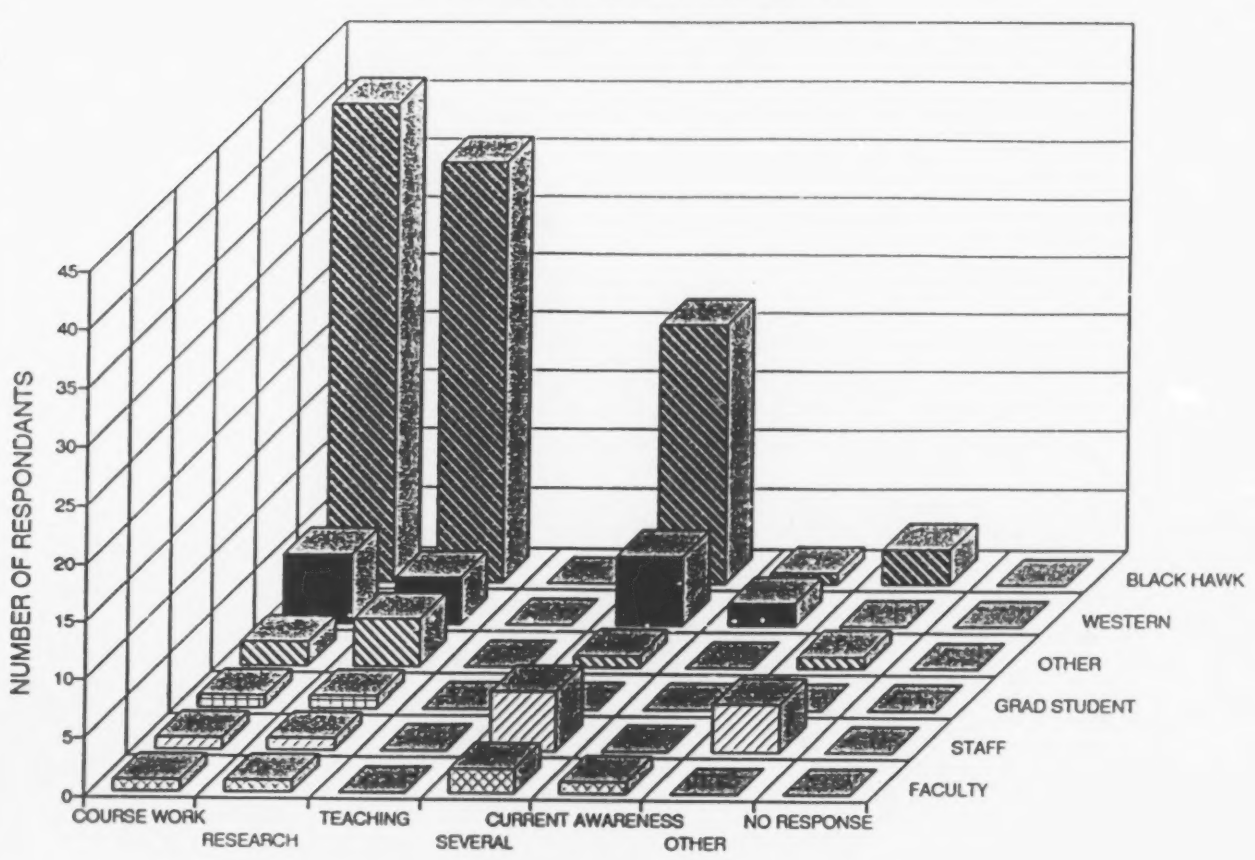

Figure 1. Use distribution

Reference Satisfaction Survey

Responses to the questionnaire are for the dates the data were taken. Therefore, one client over the course of the research period might be asked to answer more than one questionnaire if he or she sought help at the reference desk more than one of the days the sample was taken.

Table 3

RANKING

MEASURE\RANK	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	NO RES-PONSE	AVERAGE
RELEVANCE	1	3	11	26	125	166	2	4.63
AMOUNT	3	6	10	35	114	168	0	4.49
COMPLETENESS	2	4	9	29	123	167	1	4.60
HELPFULNESS	0	1	4	30	133	168	0	4.76
SATISFACTION	0	2	8	53	105	168	0	4.55

Table 3 summarizes the number of times each possible answer was given to each question on the survey. The average response for each question is also indicated. The answers were selected from a range of 1 - 5 with a response of one being the lowest rank possible and five being the highest (most positive) rank possible.

Responses to each question were as follows:

1. *Relevance* of information provided: The average response was 4.63. Eleven responded with "3", twenty-six responded with "4", and 125 responded with "5".

2. Satisfaction with the *amount* of information provided: The average response was 4.49. Ten responded with "3", thirty-five responded with "4", and 114 responded with"5".

3. *Completeness* of the answer that you received: The average response was 4.60. Nine people indicated a "3", twenty-nine people indicated a "4", and 123 indicated a "5".

4. *Helpfulness* of staff: The average response was 4.76. Four people indicated a "3", thirty people indicated a "4", and 133 indicated a "5".

5. Overall, how *satisfied* are you: The average response was 4.55. Eight people indicated a "3", fifty-three indicated a "4", and 105 indicated a "5".

Table 4

REFERENCE SERVICE TRANSACTIONS

DATE	NORMAL REFERENCE TRANSACTIONS								REDIRECTED TRANS-ACTIONS	DELAYED TRANS-ACTIONS	DIRECTIONAL QUESTIONS
	7:30 9:00	9:00 11:00	11:00 1:00	1:00 3:00	3:00 5:00	5:00 7:00	7:00 9:00	TOTAL			
10/10	5	5	5	5	6	4	0	30	1	0	47
10/19	0	8	8	0	3	--	--	19	0	2	20
10/28	--	--	--	10	6	1	--	17	0	0	17
11/15	4	10	7	4	11	7	5	48	0	0	51
11/28	5	10	8	10	2	3	1	39	2	0	45
12/01	--	4	11	13	12	--	--	40	1	0	34
12/10	4	4	3	4	3	14	0	32	0	0	36
TOTAL	18	41	42	46	43	29	6	225	4	2	250
AVE.	3.60	6.82	7.00	6.57	6.14	5.80	1.50	—	.57	.29	35.71

-- Library Closed

Reference Services Statistics

Table 4 illustrates the transactions on randomly selected days of a work week at a reference desk in the community college learning resources center surveyed. Reference transactions are broken down according to the time they took place.

7:30 - 9:00: Eighteen transactions took place at this time, for a daily average of 3.6 reference transactions. Two of the seven days of the week, the library is closed during this time slot. This was considered in the daily average computation.

9:00 - 11:00: Forty-one transactions took place at this time, for a daily average of 6.82 reference transactions. One of the seven days of the week, the

library is closed during this time slot. This was considered in the daily average computation.

11:00 - 1:00: Forty-two transactions took place at this time, for a daily average of 7.0 reference transactions. One of the seven days of the week, the library is closed during this time slot. This was considered in the daily average computation.

1:00 - 3:00: Forty-six transactions took place at this time, for a daily average of 6.57 reference transactions.

3:00 - 5:00: Forty-three transactions took place at this time, for a daily average of 6.14 reference transactions.

5:00 - 7:00: Twenty-nine transactions took place at this time, for a daily average of 5.8 reference transactions. Two of the seven days of the week, the library is closed during this time slot. This was considered in the daily average computation.

7:00 - 9:00: Six transactions took place at this time, for a daily average of 1.5 reference transactions. Three of the seven days of the week, the library is closed during this time slot. This was considered in the daily average computation.

The reference desk transferred three transactions to other libraries in the area and delayed answers to two transactions. The number of other questions which are classified as directional questions (250) was almost equal with those requiring a librarian's special knowledge (230). Normal reference transactions were 46.7% of

the total and direction (other) questions were 52% of the total. The remainder of the transactions were 1% of the total transactions.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of this study were to identify the patrons using reference service and to discover how satisfied they were with the service they received. The number of reference transactions was compared with other transactions. This section summarizes the findings and draws conclusions based on them. Suggestions for how best to plan for the future for the reference department of a community college learning resource center is considered on the basis of the findings.

Client Distribution

By far the largest number of clients answering the survey are enrolled in the community college. The second largest number of users are from the state university, which has an extension agreement with the community college in the study. This indicates that the reference department is useful to this group of clients. Comments made by the clients from the state university also indicate positive feedback on the reference transaction. They include the following. "She answered my question in a short amount of time, nothing wasted." "I just needed help with preparing a works cited page for a research project." "Very helpful--didn't mind

explaining the process several times regarding reference material and never made me feel ignorant for not knowing."

The undergraduate "other" category might include students attending a college away from home doing research in the community college learning resources center while in the area. Also possible for "other" are former students at the community college familiar with the facility for research. One comment substantiates this opinion. "I am always very satisfied by the help at the reference desk. I have come with some strange requests and they always give as much time and energy as I need; sometimes more than I have. The staff is always friendly."

The staff of the community college made the highest use of the reference librarian of any identifiable category. This would indicate that the staff of the community college had found a reason to frequent this department. One commented, "The LRC faculty and staff are professional, thoughtful and helpful always." A lesser percentage of faculty responded to the survey. Since faculty are regular users of the reference department for personal as well as teaching needs (reference records reflect frequent interlibrary loans for faculty), it is assumed that the mid-semester survey dates were not an accurate reflection of faculty use of this service. The "other" category under the general client distribution heading might include members of the community not in school or employed by the community college, who chose to work with the community college learning resources center reference desk for reasons of their own.

Use Distribution

There were 167 responses in this category of the survey, with only one person not responding. The highest number of clients were using the research for course work, with a second highest use of research. Several uses was next in descending order of use. Other uses came next. There was no comment on the survey to indicate what "other" use might be. Current awareness came in last place on the range from high number of users to low number of users.

Reference Satisfaction Survey

Overall, the information provided was relevant to what was needed. Enlightening comments in this area include, "need more detailed business and corporation information." This comment was made by a client who identified himself as "other" and who responded with the highest response for helpfulness from the reference desk. One client's comment accompanying a response of "1" on the survey was, "Needed a back issue of five years ago, but not kept at library." (It should be noted the community college learning resource center participates in cooperative collection development within the community and works closely with other libraries in the library system. Had this client expressed his frustration to the librarian, he would have been referred to the appropriate library in the community for the materials he wanted.)

In most cases, the reference librarian understood the client's request and gave complete information. Also, most clients considered the staff very helpful. Since

the librarian was aware being evaluated, this might have made a difference in the attitude toward the client. However, focusing on the client during the time of the survey, and recognition of the value of a general attitude of helpfulness can only reinforce the positive librarian/client relationship.

Most of the clients who used the reference information service during the course of the survey were satisfied (4.55 was the average response). There were no comments from people who rated the service low. Here are some helpful insights. From a blind person who rated the experience with a "5" came, "Basically because whomever I ask has to do the eyework. Frequently I can give them a hint, but in essence it requires two to 'tango' for me. So in essence your service provides a good half of the team." Another with a "5" rating said, "Was not sure how to get the information I needed." Another "5" response was, "I can find information much easier now than before." A "4" rater said, "Sometimes they could offer a little more help." A client who empathized and rated the encounter with a "5" said, "The woman at the desk looked very busy. She could probably use some help."

Reference Service Transactions

The librarian recorded questions asked and type of questions asked. Reference questions and directional questions were very close in number with a few additional directional questions.

Periods of the day when more questions are asked are from 9:00 A.M. until

7:00 P.M. This indicates a need for a reference librarian at the desk at those times. Early morning and later in the evening, the questions do fall off, but are still being asked. Ideally there should be a reference librarian there any time there is use of the reference department.

The referral of clients to a better place for the specific information suggests that there is an attitude of general goodwill towards the client seeking help, and between the professionals of the area libraries. This is healthy and commendable. Delayed transactions are a normal part of reference service, and indicate a willingness on the part of the library staff to go the extra mile.

Indications for Future Planning

The reference librarians at the community college surveyed have faculty status. They are expected to participate in college activities, to be on committees, and to be active in professional and community affairs. In addition to this, they provide bibliographic instruction to classes throughout the year. Therefore, although the survey indicates a high degree of satisfaction with reference encounters, one might question the necessity of a professional librarian answering questions of a directional nature while juggling a schedule reflective of the requirements of faculty status. The number of directional questions indicates that non-professional staff could be used to answer these questions, perhaps at an information desk, freeing the librarians for professional activities.

The reference satisfaction survey has indicated that most clients at the reference desk are satisfied with the information and help provided. By focusing on the client in the reference transaction, the study provides insight into why some answers were made. The comment section of the survey contains thoughts which might be useful in planning for the future. Also valuable for future planning were the number of service transactions and what type of transaction they were. Both of these areas have been studied for the first time, and the information forms a basis for future planning of reference services. This study also recorded a busy time in the 1990 school year with classes underway which could be reviewed and compared with a later period for growth and activity evaluation.

The use of the instrument prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee of the American Library Association was valuable in that it had been tested and retested to remove confusion and bias. Therefore, personnel of the library could do the survey, and not cloud it with bias. The obtrusive nature of the survey created a positive and supportive feeling within the department being tested. Also important was the realization that the individual librarians were not evaluated, but the service and support system was evaluated.

ENDNOTES

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13. White, 6, 7.

14. Vavrek, 339.

15. Bea Flinner, "Academic Libraries and Reference Ethics," in *Ethics and Reference Services,* ed. Bill Katz and Ruth A. Fraley (New York: The Haworth Press, 1982): 152.

16. White, 11-12.

17. Katherine Emerson, "National Reporting on Reference Transactions, 1976-78," *RQ* 16 (Spring 1977): 199.

18. Van House, 5.

19. Van House, "Form 14-1," 157.

APPENDIX A

REFERENCE SATISFACTION SURVEY

PLEASE LET US KNOW HOW WE ARE DOING. Evaluate the reference service that you received today by circling one number on each of the following scales. Feel free to explain - use the back of the form.

If you were NOT asking a reference question today, please check here ____ and stop. Thank you.

1. *Relevance* of information provided:

Not Relevant 1 2 3 4 5 Very Relevant

2. Satisfaction with the *amount* of information provided:

Not Satisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Very Satisfied
(too little, too much) (the right amount)

3. *Completeness* of the answer that you received:

Not Complete 1 2 3 4 5 Very Complete

4. *Helpfulness* of staff:

Not Helpful 1 2 3 4 5 Extraordinarily Helpful

5. Overall, how *satisfied* are you?

Not Satisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely Satisfied

Why?_____
_____

6. You are:

____1. Undergraduate (specify)
Western ____
Black Hawk ____
Other ____
____2. Graduate Student
____3. Staff of BHC
____4. Faculty of BHC
____5. Other (specify)
_____

7. What will you use this information for:

____1. Course work
____2. Research
____3. Teaching
____4. Mix of several purposes
____5. Current Awareness
____6. Other?_____

THANK YOU! **Please leave this questionnaire in the box at the top of the stairs.**

USE BACK OF PAGE FOR ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.

STAFF MEMO

October 2, 1990

To: Library full time and part time staff
From: Nancy Cornish, 796-0043

Re.: Reference Survey

We will be taking a survey of reference patron satisfaction on the following dates: October 9th, October 18th, October 27th, November 5th, November 14th, November 30th, and December 9th. This will provide helpful planning information for our reference service. We will know who is needing help at the reference desk, how they plan to use the information, and if we were able to give them what they felt they needed.

The box for the survey will be clearly marked at the top of the stairs, and students should put their finished survey in this box.

Some of the same patrons will be asked on more than one occasion to complete a questionnaire. This is important since they are evaluating the reference service that they received *at that time*. Their perception of the service may well be different on various occasions. We are sampling reference transactions, not patrons.

Thank you for your help with this. Should you have further questions, check with Charlet, Caroline, or Pat, or give me a call.

Thanks,

REFERENCE PART TIME STAFF MEMO

October 2, 1990

To: Nina, Barb, and Cathy
From: Nancy

Re: Reference Survey

The attached materials represent a good many hours of research into and modification of a reference survey, telephone tally, and reference service statistic form. Charlet, Carolyn, and Pat have been most supportive in this effort. When the project is completed, I hope it will provide meaningful information for Black Hawk as well as serve as my research paper for the Northern master's program.

Measuring Academic Library Performance, a book published this year by ALA at the request of The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), has provided the framework for these forms, and we have adapted them to Black Hawk's Learning Resource Center.

The "Reference Satisfaction Survey" schedule is attached in the letter to the staff. The day following this survey, the reference department will fill out the "Reverence Service Statistics" form and the "Telephone Tally." If you are scheduled to work on the dates mentioned, you will be asked to participate in this effort.

Thank you for your help. Please feel free to ask any questions which you might have.

Thank you,

APPENDIX B

ADMINISTERING THE SURVEY

RE: Reference Satisfaction Survey
Fall, 1990

Administering the Survey

1. Approach every person asking a reference question at the reference desk after they have been served by the librarian duty. The person passing out the surveys must be friendly, persuasive, persistent and flexible. It is important that we have a response from everyone getting help, but they must not be forced to answer the survey. This will help us maintain high quality service in the future. (Don't survey library staff members going about their jobs.)

Reference question: A reference question is part of an information contact involving special knowledge, use recommendations, interpretation, or instruction in the use of one or more information sources by a member of the library staff.

Do not avoid people who look busy, important, irritated, flaky, etc. If possible, remind people on the way out to return questionnaires to the box at the top of the stairs. Thank them for their help.

2. If people want to discuss the survey or the library, cooperate within limits; remember, you are there to dispense questionnaires. If they want to complain about or praise the library, encourage them to do so in writing on the questionnaire. Assure them that the powers-that-be will read the questionnaires so that is the best way to communicate their opinions.

3. Keep a tally of how many questionnaires are given out. Include in the tally those people you approach who decline to take a questionnaire.

SURVEYOR'S REPORT

Reference Satisfaction Survey

Surveyor's Report

Name:_____

Library: Black Hawk Learning Resource Center

Date:_____ Time Period:_____

1. NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED:

Total number of questionnaires distributed:_____
_____
_____

2. NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO REFUSED TO TAKE A QUESTIONNAIRE:
_____

3. NOTES: (anything special you think we should know? Anything unusual that happened?)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

TURN THIS FORM IN AT THE END OF YOUR SHIFT WITH ANY REMAINING QUESTIONNAIRES. THANKS!

REFERENCE SERVICES STATISTICS

Date:_____

HOUR	A. REFERENCE TRANSACTIONS	TOTAL
7:30 - 9		
9 - 11		
11 - 1		
1 - 3		
3 - 5		
5 - 7		
7 - 9		

A. Total:_____

B. Reference transactions redirected to another library or a nonlibrary source:

	Total

C. Reference transactions not completed today (includes those completed at a later time:

	Total

D. Other questions (includes directional questions and other questions not included in definition of reference transaction.)

	Total

Directions:

1. For each transaction, put one hash mark (/) in section A., B., C., or D. Unless the user has multiple questions, make only one hash mark per transaction.

2. A reference transaction is an information contact which involves the knowledge, use, recommendations, interpretation, or instruction in the use of one or more information sources by a member of the library staff. It includes information and referral services. Information sources include printed and nonprinted materials, machine-readable data bases, catalogs and other holdings, record, other libraries and institutions, and people inside and outside the library. The request may come in person, by phone, or mail, from an adult or child.

3. For users with multiple questions, record each question as a separate transaction if it deals with a new concern.

APPENDIX C

BLACK HAWK COLLEGE LIBRARY REFERENCE SURVEY DATA

SEQUENCE	RELEVANCE	AMOUNT	COMPLETENES	HELPFULNESS	SATISFACTION	CLIENT	USE	DAY	COMMENT
1	5	5	4	5	5	1b	2	1	
2	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	1	
3	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	1	Basically because whomever I ask has to do the eyework. Frequently I can give them a hint, but in essence it requires two to "tango" for me. So in essence your service provides a good half of the team.
4	5	5	4	5	5	1b	1	1	
5	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	1	Everyone is so very helpful
6	4	5	5	4	4	1w	2	1	
7	5	2	5	5	4	1b	2	1	
8	5	5	5	5	5	2	2	1	
9	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	1	If I have trouble locating something, I ask for help and it's as good as done.
10	4	4	5	5	4	1b	1	1	I got the information I wanted in a short time and it was more than I thought
11	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	1	
12	5	4	4	5	5	2	1	1	
13	3	4	3	4	3	1b	1	1	
14	5	5	3	5	5	0	0	1	
15	5	4	5	5	5	1b	4	1	The librarians know where to direct you
16	5	5	5	4	5	3	1	1	
17	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	1	LRC has always done this best to be of help to me. R.A. Puley
18	5	5	4	5	5	1b	1	1	
19	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	1	Was not sure how to get the information I needed
20	5	4	4	4	4	1b	6	1	researching colleges to transfer to
21	5	5	5	5	5	0	1	1	
22	4	2	5	5	4	1b	2	1	
23	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	1	I needed to find 3 reference materials, one microfilm, one microfiche, and a magazine. The woman at the reference desk was very helpfull. Actually came out from behind desk and showed me where & how to find things.
24	2	1	1	5	2	5	6	1	Need more detailed business & corp. info.
25	5	5	5	5	5	0	1	1	I got the answers I came for
26	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	1	
27	5	4	5	5	4	1b	4	1	
28	5	4	4	4	4	1b	4	1	
29	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	1	
30	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	1	
31	5	4	4	4	3	5	6	1	
32	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	1	
33	5	5	5	5	5	3	2	1	
34	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	1	
35	5	5	5	5	5	3	6	1	
36	4	4	4	4	4	1b	1	1	

BLACK HAWK COLLEGE LIBRARY REFERENCE SURVEY DATA

SEQUENCE	RELEVANCE	AMOUNT	COMPLETENES	HELPFULNESS	SATISFACTION	CLIENT	USE	DAY	COMMENT
37	5	5	4	5	5	1b	1	1	What I needed was taken care of promptly
38	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	1	First time I've used the Reference section - staff was able to answer questions
39	5	5	5	5	5	1w	1	1	
40	5	5	3	5	5	1w	4	1	She answered my question is a short amount of time, nothing wasted
41	4	4	3	3	4	1o	2	1	
42	5	2	5	5	4	5	6	1	
43	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	1	
44	5	4	3	5	4	1b	2	1	
45	5	4	5	5	5	1b	2	1	
46	5	4	4	5	4	1w	2	1	The information I received was JV'smokin
47	5	4	5	5	5	1w	4	2	
48	4	4	4	5	3	1b	2	2	They were patient and helped me.
49	5	5	5	5	4	1b	2	2	Sometimes they could offer a little more help.
50	3	2	2	4	3	1b	1	2	
51	3	3	3	5	4	1b	4	2	
52	5	4	4	5	5	1b	1	2	
53	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	2	I already had requested articles that were in; thank you to the BHC library staff for requesting them.
54	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	2	
55	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	2	The lady at the desk was polite and helpful and she knew what she was doing.
56	5	4	4	5	4	1b	1	2	
57	4	5	5	5	5	1b	2	2	
58	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	2	
59	5	4	5	5	5	1b	1	2	The staff was very helpful.
60	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	2	The LRC faculty and staff are professional, thoughtful and helpful always.
61	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	2	
62	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	2	
63	5	4	4	5	4	1b	6	2	
64	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	2	
65	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	2	The woman at the desk looked very busy. She could probably use some help.
66	3	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	
67	5	5	0	3	4	1b	2	2	Staff knows what they are doing and are prompt to help.
68	5	5	5	4	4	1b	1	2	
69	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	2	
70	5	4	5	5	4	5	1	2	She was nice helpful and it did not take long.
71	4	5	5	5	5	1o	4	2	
72	1	3	2	5	3	1o	1	2	
73	4	5	4	5	4	0	6	2	
74	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	3	Everyone was very helpful in assisting you.
75	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	3	Nancy Cornish was extremely helpful at the reference desk, a "role-model"

BLACK HAWK COLLEGE LIBRARY REFERENCE SURVEY DATA

SEQUENCE	RELEVANCE	AMOUNT	COMPLETENES	HELPFULNESS	SATISFACTION	CLIENT	USE	DAY	COMMENT
									librarian!
76	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	3	The staff here is always extremely helpful!
77	4	1	1	3	3	1o	2	3	Needed a back issue of 5 years ago but not kept at BHC library.
78	5	5	5	4	5	3	4	3	
79	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	3	Reference librarian made me aware of several extra sources. Very pleasant & helpful. It was really appreciated.
80	3	3	5	5	5	1w	1	3	It helps because you don't need a book reference lying in your work space.
81	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	
82	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	Lots of extra effort taken to help find my answers.
83	4	4	5	5	4	1b	2	4	
84	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	4	
85	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	4	
86	5	3	5	5	4	1b	2	4	
87	5	5	5	5	5	0	2	4	
88	4	4	4	5	5	1b	1	4	
89	4	4	3	4	4	1b	1	4	
90	3	2	4	4	3	1b	2	4	
91	5	5	5	5	4	1w	5	4	
92	5	5	5	5	5	1w	4	4	I am always very satisfied by the help at the reference desk. I have come with some strange requests and they always give as much time and energy as I need; sometimes more than I have. The staff is friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable.
93	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	4	I need information for major term paper and succeeded.
94	5	3	5	4	4	1b	1	4	
95	4	5	5	4	4	1b	1	4	The library person showed me where and how to get the periodical information I desired.
96	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	4	
97	5	5	5	5	5	1w	4	4	
98	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	4	
99	5	5	4	5	4	3	4	4	
100	4	4	5	5	4	1o	2	4	They were very helpful & extremely friendly.
101	5	5	5	5	5	1w	1	4	
102	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	4	
103	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	4	
104	4	4	5	4	4	0	4	4	
105	5	5	4	3	4	1b	2	4	Found what I needed.
106	5	5	5	5	5	1w	1	4	
107	5	5	5	5	4	1b	2	4	
108	5	5	5	5	5	1w	1	4	I just needed help with preparing any works cited page for a research project.
109	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	4	She answered my question without acting snotty (like some librarians in area libraries) and gave me information that I can use in the future.
110	2	4	5	4	5	1b	2	4	

BLACK HAWK COLLEGE LIBRARY REFERENCE SURVEY DATA

SEQUENCE	RELEVANCE	AMOUNT	COMPLETENES	HELPFULNESS	SATISFACTION	CLIENT	USE	DAY	COMMENT
111	4	4	5	4	4	1b	4	4	
112	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	4	The staff was very helpful.
113	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	4	
114	5	4	5	4	4	1b	1	4	I needed to know a specific answer and that is exactly what I received.
115	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	4	The people are wonderful! (see response sheet)
116	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	4	
117	4	5	5	5	5	1b	4	4	
118	3	5	5	4	4	1b	4	4	They all help and take time for students.
119	3	5	4	4	4	1b	5	4	
120	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	4	The help in the reference department is always very good, cheerful, and complete.
121	5	5	5	5	5	1w	4	4	Very helpful - didn't mind explaining the process several times regarding reference material and never made me feel ignorant for not knowing.
122	4	4	4	4	4	1w	2	4	
123	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	4	She helped guide me, now I know what to do.
124	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	4	
125	5	4	5	5	5	1b	2	4	
126	5	5	5	5	5	0	4	4	
127	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	4	
128	5	5	5	5	4	1b	1	4	
129	4	5	4	5	4	1w	2	4	
130	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	4	
131	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	4	The staff at the reference desk has always cooperative and eager to help. Sometimes I worry they'll get tired of seeing me, but they are always just as pleasant.
132	5	5	4	4	4	1o	1	4	
133	4	3	5	4	4	1b	2	4	With little time, I needed books here and half weren't on Body Language. Have to go to Augustana College library.
134	4	4	2	5	4	1o	2	4	
135	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	4	
136	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	
137	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	4	
138	0	3	4	4	4	4	1	4	
139	5	5	5	5	5	1b	6	4	
140	2	5	5	5	4	1b	4	4	How else would I know where to find info?
141	5	5	5	5	4	5	1	4	I feel there should be some books to help me, I just don't know where or how to explain what I need.
142	5	5	5	5	5	3	6	4	
143	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	5	They helped me find the material and other material related to it.
144	5	5	5	4	4	1b	2	5	
145	0	5	5	5	5	1o	6	5	High school report

BLACK HAWK COLLEGE LIBRARY REFERENCE SURVEY DATA

SEQUENCE	RELEVANCE	AMOUNT	COMPLETENES	HELPFULNESS	SATISFACTION	CLIENT	USE	DAY	COMMENT
146	5	3	5	4	4	5	6	5	East Moline resident needs information for personal use
147	4	3	4	4	4	1b	2	5	
148	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	5	
149	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	5	
150	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	5	I can find information much easier now than before
151	4	5	4	5	4	5	2	5	Because of the willingness of staff to help younger students
152	5	5	4	5	5	1b	1	5	
153	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	5	It was nice to have 2 staff members to help, it cut down on the wait, very prompt
154	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	6	
155	3	1	3	5	3	1b	1	6	
156	4	4	5	4	5	1w	5	6	
157	3	4	5	5	4	1w	4	6	
158	4	3	3	5	4	1b	1	6	
159	5	4	5	5	5	1b	4	7	
160	5	5	5	5	5	1b	4	7	
161	5	5	5	5	5	1w	1	7	
162	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	7	
163	5	5	5	5	5	3	6	7	Interest peaked from T.V. program
164	5	5	4	4	4	3	6	7	
165	5	5	5	5	5	1b	2	7	
166	3	5	5	4	4	5	2	7	High school
167	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	7	
168	5	5	5	5	5	1b	1	7	Always friendly and never condescending

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